

PERLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Domestic Production and Use: In 2025, the quantity of domestic processed crude perlite sold and used was estimated to be 460,000 tons with a value of \$36 million. Crude ore production was from nine mining operations managed by six companies across six Western States, with New Mexico maintaining its position as the leading producing State. Domestic apparent consumption of crude perlite was estimated to be 590,000 tons. Processed crude perlite was expanded at 53 plants in 29 States. The applications for expanded perlite were building construction products, 45%; horticultural aggregate, 15%; filter aids, 15%; and other, 25%. Other applications included fillers, which had been a leading end use in prior years but is withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data, as well as specialty insulation and miscellaneous uses.

Salient Statistics—United States:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025^e</u>
Mine production, crude ore	879	672	654	716	730
Sold or used, processed crude perlite ¹	491	442	410	452	460
Imports for consumption ²	170	240	140	220	160
Exports ²	27	22	18	26	26
Consumption, apparent ³	630	660	530	650	590
Price, average value, free on board mine, dollars per metric ton	64	69	74	75	78
Employment, mine and mill, number	150	150	150	150	150
Net import reliance ⁴ as a percentage of apparent consumption	23	33	23	30	23

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2021–24): Greece, 94%; China, 3%; and other, 3%.

<u>Tariff:</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
			<u>12–31–25</u>
	Vermiculite, perlite, and chlorites, unexpanded	2530.10.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 10% (domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

Events, Trends, and Issues: Perlite is a siliceous volcanic glass that expands up to 20 times its original volume when rapidly heated. Construction applications for expanded perlite are numerous because it is fire resistant, an excellent insulator, and lightweight. In horticultural uses, expanded perlite is used to provide moisture retention and aeration without compaction when added to soil. Horticultural perlite is useful to both commercial growers and hobby gardeners.

In January 2025, a leading global producer of industrial minerals headquartered in France completed the acquisition of a European diatomite and perlite business that was previously owned by a Pittsburgh, PA-based corporation. The acquisition consisted of three mining and industrial assets in France and Italy.

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The amount of processed perlite sold or used from U.S. mines was estimated to have slightly increased in 2025 compared with the amount in 2024. Construction-related uses have consistently been the leading use of perlite. In the United States, new residential construction starts increased slightly during the first 8 months of 2025 compared with those in the same period in 2024.

The four leading perlite-producing countries, which accounted for 92% of world production in 2025, in descending order of estimated production, were China, Turkey, Greece, and the United States. Although China was the leading producer, most of its perlite production was estimated to be consumed internally. Greece and Turkey remained the world's leading exporters of perlite.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Production ^e		Reserves ⁵
	2024	2025	
United States	⁶ 7,452	⁶ 460	50,000
Argentina	32	30	NA
Armenia	29	30	NA
China	1,500	1,500	32,000
Georgia	⁷ 39	40	NA
Greece	840	840	180,000
Hungary ⁸	77	80	NA
Iran	70	70	15,000
Mexico ⁸	29	30	NA
New Zealand	18	20	NA
Philippines	⁷ 15	20	NA
Slovakia	⁷ 42	40	30,000
South Africa	11	10	NA
Turkey ⁸	⁷ 1,360	1,400	NA
Other countries	12	10	NA
World total (rounded) ⁹	4,520	4,600	NA

World Resources:⁵ Perlite occurrences in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon may contain large resources. Significant deposits have been reported in China, Greece, Turkey, and a few other countries. Available information was insufficient to make reliable estimates of resources in many perlite-producing countries.

Substitutes: In construction applications, diatomite, expanded clay and shale, pumice, and slag can be substituted for perlite. For horticultural uses, coco coir, pumice, vermiculite, and wood pulp are alternative soil additives and are sometimes used in conjunction with perlite.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Data for 2023 were rounded to two significant digits to avoid disclosing proprietary information.

²Exports and imports were estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey from U.S. Census Bureau combined data for vermiculite, perlite, and chlorites, unexpanded. Data are rounded to two significant digits.

³Defined as processed crude perlite sold and used + imports – exports. Data are rounded to two significant digits.

⁴Defined as imports – exports.

⁵See Appendix C for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁶Processed ore sold and used by producers.

⁷Reported.

⁸Crude ore.

⁹Data may not add to totals shown because of independent rounding.